

the 5th of April, as a day of fasting and prayer.

The Anti-Slavery Bugle.

SALEM, OHIO, MARCH 31, 1855.

LETTER FROM JOSHUA R. GIDDINGS.

Jefferson, March 20, 1855.

Mr. Robinson:—
In the Bugle of Saturday last you say he (Mr. Giddings) repudiated the "higher law" and put the pro-slavery portions of the Constitution in its place. Will you be more specific and say when and where and in what language, I repudiated the "higher law"? Or put portions of the pro-slavery Constitution in its place? You say, "Mr. Giddings is careful again to disclaim all purpose to prevent this pirate traffic in Christian men and women, provided these christianized chattels are taken to market by land and not by sea." This remark implies that Congress possesses Constitutional power to prevent persons from going by land from Virginia to South Carolina or Georgia? You and I hold slaves to be persons. The Constitution declares them persons in every instance in which it refers to them; and I should be under great obligations to any man that would point me to the power which Congress possesses to prohibit persons going from one State to another by land. By doing that you would confer a great benefit on the country as it would enable Congress to prevent slaves from being taken from one State to another.

Conscience in the language of the Constitution can only be carried on in property, which is held by all advocates of freedom to be distinct and entirely separate from persons. The Constitution nowhere admits that it is possible for man to be made property. Mr. Madison said in the convention "It would be wrong to admit in the Constitution that man can be held as property." The States may in their individual capacity declare men, or angels, or devils to be property. For I understand man to be constituted of mind, intellect, spirit, soul and the body is the mere tenement, the residence in which the man dwells for a time only. Now to speak of a commerce in spirits whether mortals or angels would be to me just as absurd as to speak of a commerce in that deity in whose likeness man was created. You appear to think the Constitution has authorized a Commerce, to be carried on in slaves, by land where you say, "If these slave mongers drive their manacle Coffers with all their accustomed brutality over land from Norfolk to Savannah or Charleston it is the prosecution of a Constitutional Commerce with which Mr. Giddings will not meddle."

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I would not be sensitive under criticism, but I appeal to your readers whether in the remarks I made I justly incurred the imputations of having in any degree laid aside my "manhood" or my "self respect" or my "moral principles." Again when I told the fugitive to defend himself for the purpose of inspiring him with manly dignity; and added "were I in your place I would defend my liberty while I could wield a weapon," all will see that I did it to impress him still further with the importance of defending his own manhood. For the same purpose I told him "I cannot defend you," for I could not go with nor could I attend him on his journey. In doing this did I lay aside my own manhood. I did not say what I would do if present when a slave catcher shall arrest a fugitive, but what I would do if I were in the place of the fugitive.

Q. "Have you ever placed the deadly weapon in the hands of the flying bondman?"
A. Never. Never was I for a moment the owner of a deadly weapon, either dirk-knife, sword, gun, or revolver.
Q. "Have you endeavored to nerve him up to the defence of his own humanity?"

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I stated that you repudiated the higher law, and put pro-slavery portions of the Constitution in its place. You ask, "when?" "where?" and "in what language?" "Will you be more specific?"
I will; though I thought I was sufficiently so before. It is not my wont to make so grave a charge, without what I think good authority.
The higher law, which you are charged with setting aside—what is it? In regard to the fugitive slave, it is this:
"Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best."
Such is the law of Moses—such the higher law—the law of God.
The pro-slavery article of the Constitution which is at war with, and which you, sir, substitute for this higher law, says of escaping servants:
"They shall not be discharged from service or labor, but shall be delivered up."

Certainly these two laws are conflicting, and the latter is in such language that it might seem intended to repeal the former. As I understand your language on various occasions, you propose that, in some form, the people shall discharge this constitutional obligation. Hence the charge. I will be specific, and give what is reported to be your own language.

In your answer to Mr. Letcher, you say:
"We will live up to all our constitutional obligations."

On the 4th of July, in the city of Providence, R. I., you said:
"No man says that we intend to violate the Constitution in any particular."

That these declarations are to be specifically applied to the fugitive clause, is manifest from what follows in the same speech. You say:
"In my view of this matter, I agree with Henry Clay. He said, the Federal Government cannot tax, and the return of runaway slaves. 'A slave from this,' said he, 'it has no power over the institution of slavery.' Today, my friends, I repeat that doctrine."

Again, in the same speech:
"Let me be understood. Whenever we have legislated on this subject, [slavery] we have violated the Constitution. I mean with no exceptions, save the return of fugitive slaves."

Again, at the same time and place:
"Now, my friends, the reform we propose is, to restore the Constitution to its pristine purity, to repeal the present fugitive slave law, and reinstate the law of 1793, which leaves the master the liberty to come and catch his slave, if he can get him."

On other occasions, also, you say you have proposed to reinstate the fugitive law of 1793. Whether or that law is in harmony with the higher law, our readers can judge for themselves, after reading it. I copy it below in a note. Let them, if they please, take your own synopsis of the provisions of that law—your anti-slavery interpretation of it—and still I am sustained in the charge I have made.

In a letter over your own signature, published in the Bugle of Sept. 9, 1854, speaking of the fugitive law of '33, you say:
"It prohibited the people of the free States from secreting the slave. 2d. From defending the slave. 3d. From rescuing the slave from his master." And you should have added, left the whole territory of the free States open as a hunting-ground for his pursuer. The higher law says the fugitive shall dwell with you. You, sir, say, let the hunter come and get him, if he can. Let him take him if he can, while we Northern people will regard our constitutional obligations, refusing to secrete him from the hunter—to defend him from his more than murderous assault—or to rescue him when once in the clutches of the villain. And will impose a fine upon all men or women whose divine impulses of humanity compel them thus to aid the oppressed and hunted against the oppressor.

Again, on the same 4th of July, you make Judge Meigs's language your own, and say:
"In the emphatic language of Judge Meigs, of the Supreme Court, 'No man has a right to interfere between a slave and his master: neither to secrete a slave from his master, nor defend a slave from his master, nor to rescue a slave from the possession of his master.' And there our duty ends and the duties of the Federal Government end there also."

And I should suppose that the the slave master and reasonable cause to be satisfied that it should end there. The master's absolute right is conceded—"no man has a right to interfere between the slave and his master." What could the slaveholder ask more?

In the next sentence of this speech, as reported, you proceed to say:
"The whole object of the clause in respect to fugitives is, to prevent Northern men from acting."

Sec. 3. And be it also enacted, That when a person shall labor in any of the United States, or in either of the territories on the northwest or south of the river Ohio, under the laws thereof, shall escape into any other of the said States or territories, the person to whom such service or labor may be due, his agent or attorney is hereby empowered to seize or arrest such fugitive from labor, and to take him or her before any judge of the Circuit or District Courts of the United States, residing or being within the State, or before any magistrate of a county, city or town corporate, wherein such seizure or arrest shall be made, and upon proof to the satisfaction of such judge or magistrate, either by oral testimony or affidavit taken before and certified by a magistrate of any such State or territory, that the person so seized or arrested, doth, under the laws of the State or territory from which he or she fled, owe service or labor to the person claiming him or her, and it shall be the duty of such judge or magistrate to give a certificate thereof to such claimant, his agent or attorney which shall be sufficient warrant for removing the said fugitive from labor, to the State or territory from which he or she fled."
Sec. 4. And be it further enacted, That any person who shall knowingly and willingly obstruct or hinder such claimant, his agent or attorney, in so seizing or arresting such fugitive from labor, or shall rescue such fugitive from such claimant, his agent or attorney, when so arrested pursuant to the authority herein given or declared; or shall harbor or conceal such person after notice that he or she was a fugitive from labor as aforesaid, shall, for either of the said offences, forfeit and pay the sum of five hundred dollars. Which penalty may be recovered by and for the benefit of such claimant, by action of debt in any court proper to try the same; saving, moreover, to the person claiming such labor or service, his right of action for or on account of the said injuries or either of them.

Approved February 12, 1793.

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A. Yes; many a time and often, and shall do so again.

Q. "Have you ever told him you would defend your own liberty while you could wield a weapon?"

A. Can't answer positively, either in the affirmative or negative, as I cannot now recall all my conversations with fugitives. I think it very likely I never did, as it never occurred to me as important in such connection, till your question suggested it. I will, however, give it the consideration it merits, when I next have opportunity to converse with a fugitive.

I stated that you repudiated the higher law, and put pro-slavery portions of the Constitution in its place. You ask, "when?" "where?" and "in what language?" "Will you be more specific?"

I will; though I thought I was sufficiently so before. It is not my wont to make so grave a charge, without what I think good authority.

The higher law, which you are charged with setting aside—what is it? In regard to the fugitive slave, it is this:

"Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee: he shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best."

Such is the law of Moses—such the higher law—the law of God.

The pro-slavery article of the Constitution which is at war with, and which you, sir, substitute for this higher law, says of escaping servants:

"They shall not be discharged from service or labor, but shall be delivered up."

Certainly these two laws are conflicting, and the latter is in such language that it might seem intended to repeal the former. As I understand your language on various occasions, you propose that, in some form, the people shall discharge this constitutional obligation. Hence the charge. I will be specific, and give what is reported to be your own language.

In your answer to Mr. Letcher, you say:

"We will live up to all our constitutional obligations."

On the 4th of July, in the city of Providence, R. I., you said:

"No man says that we intend to violate the Constitution in any particular."

That these declarations are to be specifically applied to the fugitive clause, is manifest from what follows in the same speech. You say:

"In my view of this matter, I agree with Henry Clay. He said, the Federal Government cannot tax, and the return of runaway slaves. 'A slave from this,' said he, 'it has no power over the institution of slavery.' Today, my friends, I repeat that doctrine."

Again, in the same speech:

"Let me be understood. Whenever we have legislated on this subject, [slavery] we have violated the Constitution. I mean with no exceptions, save the return of fugitive slaves."

Again, at the same time and place:

"Now, my friends, the reform we propose is, to restore the Constitution to its pristine purity, to repeal the present fugitive slave law, and reinstate the law of 1793, which leaves the master the liberty to come and catch his slave, if he can get him."

On other occasions, also, you say you have proposed to reinstate the fugitive law of 1793. Whether or that law is in harmony with the higher law, our readers can judge for themselves, after reading it. I copy it below in a note. Let them, if they please, take your own synopsis of the provisions of that law—your anti-slavery interpretation of it—and still I am sustained in the charge I have made.

In a letter over your own signature, published in the Bugle of Sept. 9, 1854, speaking of the fugitive law of '33, you say:

"It prohibited the people of the free States from secreting the slave. 2d. From defending the slave. 3d. From rescuing the slave from his master." And you should have added, left the whole territory of the free States open as a hunting-ground for his pursuer. The higher law says the fugitive shall dwell with you. You, sir, say, let the hunter come and get him, if he can. Let him take him if he can, while we Northern people will regard our constitutional obligations, refusing to secrete him from the hunter—to defend him from his more than murderous assault—or to rescue him when once in the clutches of the villain. And will impose a fine upon all men or women whose divine

A CLERICAL DOCUMENT.

omnipotence of the ballot-box. The
of a dissolution of the Union are incalcula-
ble. The farewell address of him, the Father of
his country, and the far seeing vision of that great
founder of the Constitution, the late Chief Jus-
tice, have portrayed but half its horrors.

e do not know. To us there would have seemed much more propriety in bestowing it upon landless farmers, who would have rendered it productive, and thus have increased the wealth of the nation.

have concurred in granting five years, in five annual payments, to the cause. Twenty families are to be sent in Basco county, on St. Paul's, and are to be prepared for occupation immediately reaching the locality.

is sufficiently stringent to suit the views of the most ultra friends of prohibitory legislation and its passage will inaugurate a new era in temperance legislation, hardly less important than that which commenced with the passage of the original Maine law.

Persons in the States wishing to co-operate with Mrs. Blith, will please address her at Detroit, Michigan; In Canada, Windsor, Canada West.
Jan. 20, 1865.

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